

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 304116 TOSEC 250051

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JM, US

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM-PUERTO RICAN ISSUE AT THE UN

TO THE SECRETARY FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

1. ATTENTION PAUL BARBIAN: PLEASE ADD FOLLOWING ITEM TO BRIEFING PAPERS PREPARED FOR SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER MANLEY.

2. BACKGROUND:

THE UN REMOVED PUERTO RICO FROM ITS LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES IN 1953. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT, VIA A VARIETY OF MEANS, TO INDUCE THE UN TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE. THE LAST SUCH CUBAN INITIATIVE WITHIN THE U.S. TOOK PLACE AT THE UN COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION (COMMITTEE OF 24) IN AUGUST, 1975. A PROCEDURAL MOTION TO
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POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF THE CUBAN PROPOSAL UNTIL THE

1976 SESSION COULD BE A CLOSE VOTE (11-9 WITH 2 ABSTENTIONS, 1 ABSENT, AND 1 NOT PARTICIPATING). WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE CUBANS WILL AGAIN RAISE THE ISSUE WHEN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 RECONVENES IN FEBRUARY. JAMAICA IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24.

3. U.S. POSITION:

WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATUS OF PUERTO RICO IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE MATTER FOR UN CONSIDERATION. THE COMMONWEALTH IS SELF-GOVERNING AND CONTINUES TO MEET THE CRITERIA ON WHICH THE 1953 UN DECISION WAS BASED. EFFORTS TO GET UN ENDORSEMENT FOR PRO-INDEPENDENCE ELEMENTS IN PUERTO RICO CONSTITUTE INTERFERENCE IN THE COMMONWEALTH, AND THEREFORE IN U.S. INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

4. JAMAICAN POSITION:

FORNMIN THOMPSON HAS TOLD US THAT THE GOJ UNDERSTANDS AND ACCEPTS THE U.S. POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. THE GOJ HAS, HOWEVER, SUBSCRIBED TO SUPPORTING SELF-DETERMINATION WITHIN THE CARIBBEAN REGION AND SEES THE POSSIBILITY OF A LINK BETWEEN PUERTO RICO AND BELIZE.

5. TALKING POINTS:

-- WE EXPECT THE CUBANS TO PURSUE THEIR EFFORTS ON PUERTO RICO AT THE UN AND IN OTHER FORA.

-- WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO DEFEAT SUCH INITIATIVES.

-- THE CUBAN POSITION HAS NO BASIS WHATEVER IN FACT; THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE HAVE GIVEN ONLY SLIGHT SUPPORT (LESS THAN 5 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN RECENT ELECTIONS) TO PRO-INDEPENDENCE FORCES ON THE ISLAND.

-- WE REALIZE JAMAICA IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24, BUT WE HOPE THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE JAMAICAN SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE IN ANY INTERNATIONAL

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REVIEW OF PUERTO RICO'S STATUS.

-- I HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THE CUBAN INITIATIVE TO GARNER INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICO'S INDEPENDENCE IS AN UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE INTO U.S. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. ROBINSON

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